

Dear FDA;

I am writing today to express my strong objection, about the shellfish issue going on now. By the Center for Science in the Public Interest. I myself and many other fishermen that works in the oyster industry, for many years we all know about the difficulties that the famers, processor, and their families who depends on shellfish. I can tell you first-hand of the economic damage, that this proposed rules, will put a hurt to us.

Most people in shellfish, owns small operations with little financial stability and with a very low cash reserves. Forcing us with the mandatory treatmant will make alot of the fishermen go out of the business altogether. And what are they going to do then, How will they support their families with no income at all coming in. They can't just go out and find another job overnight. About 60% of the fishermen started out at a young age. They will have to go on walfare and get foodstamps. I know for sure that they don't want to do that , and you wouldn't want that to happen eihter to these people.

We just can't afford the equipment and can't absorb the lower consumer demand which will result from treated oysters. As it is we don't get much for our catch, you should know the prices that we get. But when they reach the stores and markets, they are about 4 times higher, then what we get paid for them. If we have to treat the oysters, we will be giving them away for free. Then the stores will go up on the prices, nobody will afford to but them. Like I said before, we don't make any money as it is. By the time we pay for the tags, to tag the sacks, and gas, groceries and breakdowns, we don't have too much left to pay our bills and feed our children. Would you like that to happen to your family. I don't think you would. Consumers should have a choice between treated oysters and fresh oysters.

The people that is sick already should know not to eat them raw. We already had to put the health warning labels on them, If they choose to eat them it should be their own level of personal responsibility. I am begging the FDA to reject these crippling rules and to allow other appropriate independent state and national bodies such as ISSC to continue to their educational and oversight activities as they have in the past, please just let it go.

Thank you,
Clifford LeBouef Sr

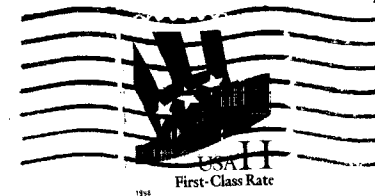
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